

Drinking Water Information

If you own or operate a non-municipal year-round residential drinking water system...

This fact sheet may apply to drinking water systems serving private subdivisions, condominium or townhouse complexes, apartment buildings, mobile home parks, year-round cottage developments and year-round trailer parks or campgrounds.

As an owner/operator of a non-municipal year-round residential drinking water system, there are a number of requirements you must meet in order to comply with Ontario's Drinking-Water Systems Regulation (O. Reg. 170/03).

The information in this fact sheet will help you determine if your system is required to sample, test and treat your water according to the Drinking-Water Systems Regulation. If these requirements apply to you, this fact sheet will summarize steps you must take to meet your responsibilities under the regulation.

Definition of a non-municipal year-round residential system is as follows:

- A drinking water system that serves 6 or more private residences, or a trailer park or campground that has 6 or more sites with water hook-up.
- The system is not a seasonal system.
- The drinking water system is not owned by a municipality.

Connected systems and facilities:

If your non-municipal year-round residential drinking water system is connected to and obtains its water from another drinking water system that meets the treatment and testing requirements of O.Reg. 170/03, then you may be exempt from the requirement to provide treatment and may only have limited testing requirements. Refer to section 5 of the Drinking-Water Systems Regulation for more information on the action you must take.

Furthermore, if you own a facility, such as an apartment building, that is connected to and your water comes directly from a municipal or other drinking water system that is regulated under O.Reg. 170/03 and meets the testing and treatment requirements of this regulation, and all the piping in your facility is plumbing under the building code, then the Drinking-Water Systems Regulation **does not apply to your facility and nothing is required of you.** Regulated drinking water systems must meet stringent requirements under the Drinking-Water Systems Regulation to ensure that the water supplied to the homes and other buildings connected to the system is safe.

Non-municipal year-round residential systems that must meet the testing and treatment requirements

You should follow the steps summarized on pages 3 and 4. You should also refer to a more detailed kit that is available at www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/gp/4427e.pdf or you can obtain it by calling 1-800-565-4923.

Systems in this category were required to start sampling and testing water by **June 1, 2003**. In addition, systems in this category must install treatment equipment by **July 1, 2006** for both surface water and groundwater sources. The actions you must take to meet your responsibilities under the Drinking-Water Systems Regulation are summarized on pages 3 and 4.

If your system serves a designated facility on site, owners and operators of drinking water systems serving these facilities were required to begin testing June 1, 2003. Owners and operators of designated facilities except for children's camps and seniors' residences not operated for commercial purposes have been responsible for treating their water since July 1, 2003. Children's camps and seniors' residences not operated for commercial purposes were required to comply with the treatment requirements of the Drinking-Water Systems Regulation as of July 1, 2004. For more details on these requirements, refer to the Children's Camp Fact Sheet and the Not-for-Profit Seniors' Residence Fact Sheet.

Please remember that this fact sheet is provided for guidance only. For a complete understanding of your responsibilities as a drinking water system owner you must refer directly to the Drinking-Water Systems Regulation. For the most up-to-date fact sheets, a kit explaining your responsibilities in more detail and for copies of the regulation, check the Ministry of the Environment's website at www.ene.gov.on.ca or call the Public Information Centre at 1-800-565-4923.

Maintaining your well

If your source of water is groundwater, you must also properly maintain your well to protect the groundwater supply.

Well owners are responsible for any wells on their property, so it is important that you understand the rules and what you can do to make sure your well is properly constructed and maintained. Ontario's Wells Regulation (O. Reg. 903 under the *Ontario Water Resources Act*) as amended in August 2003, sets out new standards for well construction, location and abandonment that must be followed by well owners and the contractors they hire to construct, repair or seal a well.

To learn more about these standards, please refer to the ministry's website www.ene.gov.on.ca for fact sheets on:

- water well construction
- the protection of water quality in drilled wells
- the protection of water quality in bored or dug wells
- the protection of water quality in jetted and driven point wells.

However, to be certain your well is in compliance, you should review Ontario's Wells Regulation. This can be viewed on the Ministry of the Environment website at www.ene.gov.on.ca. You can obtain a print copy by calling the ministry's Public Information Centre at 1-800-565-4923. You may also want to consider hiring a licenced well contractor to conduct an inspection.

Steps for Compliance with O. Reg. 170/03 Requirements for a Non-Municipal Year-Round Residential System

Step 1: Register your drinking water system

- To register your system, go to the Drinking Water Information System (DWIS) at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm and follow the on-line instructions.
- Once you have registered, you will be sent an email with your drinking water system number, category, user name and password, usually within one to two business days.
- While the Ministry of the Environment requires electronic submissions of information, you may be authorized to make paper submissions under special circumstances. Please call 1-866-793-2588 for more information about paper submissions.

Step 2: Select a licenced laboratory(ies) to analyze your drinking water samples

- Provide the Ministry of the Environment with information about the licenced laboratory(ies) you will use to analyze your drinking water samples, by filling out a *Laboratory Services Notification Form*, which is available on DWIS at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm
- A list of laboratories that are licenced by the Ministry of the Environment to carry out drinking water testing services is available at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/sdwa/licencedlabs.htm

Step 3: Sampling and testing requirements

- It is your responsibility to know and meet the sampling and testing requirements applicable to your system.

Microbiological sampling and testing requirements:

- Raw water samples **must be collected at least once a month**
- Distribution samples **must be collected:**
 - if not chlorinating or chloraminating, **at least twice a week**
 - if chlorinating or chloraminating, **once every week**
- A series of acceptable results over 24 consecutive months may allow you to reduce the frequency of sampling.

Chemical sampling and testing requirements vary depending on the parameter.

Review Schedule 13 of the Drinking-Water Systems Regulation for the requirements. The regulation is available at:

www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/sdwa/legislation.htm or by calling 1-800-565-4923.

- All organic and inorganic parameters listed in Schedules 23 and 24 of the O. Reg. 170/03: **Once every 36 months for ground water source; or Once every 12 months for surface water source.**
- Nitrate and Nitrite: **At least once every 3 months**
- Trihalomethanes (THMs) (only those systems that chlorinate or chloramine): **Once every 3 months**
- Sodium and Fluoride: **At least once every 5 years**
- Lead: **At least once every 12 months**

- The way you collect and transport your drinking water samples affects the accuracy of your test results. It is critical that drinking water samples are transported and collected as specified by the laboratory(ies).
- For more information on collecting drinking water samples, refer to *A Kit for Regulated Non-Municipal Drinking-Water System Owners*. You can access the kit online at www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/gp/4427e.pdf or you can order a print copy by calling 1-800-565-4923.

Step 4: Have a “certified operator” adjust equipment and conduct operational checks

- Ensure once your treatment deadline comes into effect that a “certified operator” performs all necessary adjustments to the water treatment equipment and conducts any required operational checks (e.g. chlorine or turbidity tests).
- A “certified operator” is a person who holds a “Limited Groundwater Certificate” or a “Limited Surface Water Certificate”, depending on the source of the water. A person certified as a Water Treatment operator may also operate these types of systems. Contact the Ontario Environmental Training Consortium at www.oetc.on.ca for more information or by calling 1-905-796-2851.

Step 5: Have an engineering evaluation report completed and submit written notice to the Ministry of the Environment

- Hire a professional engineer with experience in sanitary engineering to prepare your engineering

evaluation report on the installation of treatment equipment.

- Names of some service providers are available at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/gp/4222e_appendix.htm
- If your system began operating **on or after June 1, 2003**, the engineering evaluation report is due **within 30 days** of operation and/or following an alteration to the system.
- If your system began operating **before June 1, 2003**, the report is due within 30 days of: **July 1, 2006 for both surface water and groundwater systems or after that date within 30 days of an alteration to the system.**
- Submit written notice to the Ministry of the Environment within 7 days of receiving the report using an *Engineering Evaluation Report Notice* available on DWIS at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm
- Do not submit the report to the Ministry of the Environment. Keep it on file and make it available upon request.

Know Your Minimum Treatment Requirements

- Primary Disinfection for groundwater sources.
- Filtration and Primary Disinfection for surface water sources.

Step 6: Applying for full relief from requiring any treatment

- You can only apply for full relief from treatment requirements if your drinking water system relies on a groundwater source. Your engineering report should include this information.
- Consult with users of the system and your local Medical Officer of Health, then summarize comments and responses.
- Submit the summary and provide written notice to the Ministry of the Environment using the appropriate application. Refer to the *Guide for Applying for Approvals Related to Municipal and Non- Municipal Drinking-Water Systems* available at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/gp/4467e.pdf

Step 7: Notify authorities of adverse test results and other problems

- As soon as you become aware of an adverse test result or if you observe that your drinking water system is not properly disinfecting water that is being directed to users, immediately contact your local Medical Officer of Health AND the Ministry of the Environment Spills Action Centre (SAC). SAC can be reached at 1-800-268-6060.

- Submit written notice to both of the above authorities within 24 hours using the *Written Notification of Adverse Water Quality Incident* form available on DWIS at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm
- Submit written notice to the ministry and the local Medical Officer of Health of action taken and results achieved within 7 days after the issue is resolved using the *Written Notification of Adverse Water Quality Incident* form available on DWIS at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm

Step 8: Take corrective action

- Refer to Schedule 18 of the Drinking-Water Systems Regulation for actions you must take following adverse test results or other problems.
- Where required, post warning notices in prominent locations where they are likely to be seen by those using water from the system.
- Obtain Ministry of the Environment-approved warning notices by calling 1-800-565-4923.

Step 9: Submit an annual report

- The Drinking-Water Systems Regulation requires that all regulated drinking water systems submit an annual report.
- The Annual Report covers the reporting period from January 1st through December 31st. Submit the report by February 28th of the following year.
- Submit the report to the Ministry of the Environment using the *Annual Report* format available on DWIS at: www.ene.gov.on.ca/environet/DWIS/index.htm

Step 10: Make information available to the public

- Keep copies of the following reports on site, and make them available on request, free of charge, during normal business hours:
 - Annual Reports for the last two years
 - Engineering Evaluation Reports for the last two years
 - all required test results, approvals and orders issued for the last two years
 - a copy of the Drinking-Water Systems Regulation (O. Reg. 170/03)

If you would like more information, please contact the Ministry of the Environment's Public Information Centre at: 1-800-565-4923.

You may access all the documents including the Drinking-Water Systems Regulation (O. Reg. 170/03) and DWIS notices and reports at www.ene.gov.on.ca